

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

In the heart of Lancashire's Burnley Coalfield, deep beneath the surface, lay a hidden realm known as Moorfield. It was a place of mystery and enchantment, where magical beings roamed and legends came to life.

Among these fantastical creatures was the Knocker, a mischievous gnome-like being. The Knocker, also known as the Knacker, was a diminutive figure standing only 2 feet tall. It possessed a disproportionately large head, long arms, wrinkled skin, and a magnificent set of white whiskers. Donning a miniature miner's garb, the Knocker was known for its playful antics and love for pranks.

Miners who toiled in the depths of the Burnley Coalfield often encountered the mischievous Knocker. It would stealthily make its way through the tunnels, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike. Unattended tools and food were its favorite targets, disappearing in the blink of an eye, much to the dismay of the hardworking miners.

One day, deep within the Reedley Mine, a young miner named Tom ventured into the dark recesses of the tunnel. He had heard tales of the Knocker's exploits and was both curious and apprehensive. As he trudged along, his lantern casting eerie shadows on the walls, he felt a peculiar presence nearby.

Tom's heart raced as he glimpsed a fleeting figure darting in and out of the shadows. It was the Knocker, its wrinkled face beaming with mischief. Sensing the miner's fear, the mischievous creature decided to reveal itself.

"Be not afraid, young one," the Knocker spoke, its voice resonating with an otherworldly charm.

"I mean no harm, but rather seek to bring laughter to the depths of these mines."

Tom cautiously approached the Knocker, his curiosity overpowering his initial fear. "Why do you play these tricks on us miners?" he asked, his voice tinged with both annoyance and intrigue. The Knocker's eyes twinkled mischievously. "For centuries, I have watched as men toil and sweat in these dark tunnels. I bring a moment of respite, a flicker of joy amidst the toil. Life is too short not to revel in the simple pleasures, my friend."

Tom pondered the Knocker's words, realizing the truth in them. The arduous work of the miners often left them weary and burdened, in need of a lighthearted distraction. Perhaps the Knocker's pranks were a way of reminding them to find joy in the midst of hardship.

From that day forward, Tom and the Knocker formed an unlikely bond. The little creature would continue its playful antics, but always in good spirits. It would leave small tokens of appreciation for the miners, hidden treasures and notes of encouragement, brightening their days in the dark mines.

The legend of the Knocker spread throughout the Burnley Coalfield, becoming a symbol of resilience and camaraderie. The miners, no longer fearing its tricks, embraced the creature as a guardian of their spirits, a reminder to find laughter in even the darkest of places.

And so, the Knocker's legacy endured, weaving its way into the rich tapestry of Lancashire folklore. Even today, as the Burnley Coalfield lies dormant, the spirit of the mischievous gnome-like creature lives on, a symbol of the indomitable human spirit and the power of a shared smile in the face of adversity.

By Donald Jay.